

Amherst Recycling & Refuse Management Committee  
**Meeting Minutes 5/1/2014**

In attendance: Arnie Alper, Cristina Cox Fernandes, Craig Goff, Brenda Kennedy-Davies, Sue Morrello, John Root, Susan Waite.

April 3, 2014 minutes were amended and approved.

Susan will copy RRMC members when she sends copy of minutes to get posted on-line.

**Waste Reduction and Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT) Developments**

John has been researching how a zero waste initiative is best supported. The motivation behind PAYT trash systems is to reward people for producing less trash by charging them less. This concept has been a key component to many successful US zero waste efforts, but Amherst's subscription-based trash system (whereby residents contract directly with haulers) makes such a move complicated because the Town has very little control (over pricing, etc.). Getting existing waste haulers to agree on rates is problematic, and Town Counsel has explained that the Town is not allowed to set fees. In order to get more oversight over the Town's waste, the DPW would have to have a larger administrative role and initiate an RFP (request for proposal) process with specific requests.

John Musante would like more information about what rollout of a Zero Waste Plan for Amherst would look like we pursue endorsement of a Zero Waste proclamation. John Root feels that a meeting with all the interested parties in one room would be beneficial. This would include John Musante, Julie Federman, Susan Waite, Guilford Mooring and Select Board Members.

One concern of PAYT is that it can cause more contamination in the recycling stream and more illegal dumping. Susan suggested that we pursue a technical assistance grant to get DEP's help (Arlene Miller) determining how to proceed with a PAYT in Amherst. We would want something that would benefit the local haulers as well.

Committee's key desires for Amherst's waste stream:

- Detailed PAYT
- Control over what is collected
- Enforcement through tagging bags or fines
- Education for residents
- Organics out of the trash either through curbside pickup, farmers' sites, home composting or drop off grocery store locations

John left the meeting for another engagement. The group discussed a voiced concern regarding lack of focus on previously established priorities. Minutes from our January priority-setting meeting were reviewed and it was confirmed that continued support of zero waste is an ongoing goal.

Motion: The committee will spend a portion of the monthly meeting time working on a zero waste project plan in addition to the other three working group topics.

Discussion: Some committee members think we are pursuing zero waste through other initiatives and don't understand why it needs to be a separate pursuit. Further discussion tabled until John Root is present.

## **Working Group Reports**

### **Composting**

Brenda drafted a letter to show support for Amend Organics attempt to create an organics collection system at the Amherst Cinema Block building. Sue reported that the working group needs to be impartial and can't appear to support one particular hauler in their quest to develop an organics collection for businesses in town. John will continue to stay in touch with Cam Weimar of Amend Organics to keep abreast of the situation. Sue also reported that the group agreed to send a letter to all restaurants in town, explaining the new regulations regarding organics separation, why composting is good, a list of haulers that accept separated organics and the link to CET's plans for restaurants. Three local haulers who accept separated organics were identified, Amend Organics, Triple T and Alternative Recycling. It is unknown whether any of the national haulers offer organics pickup. Julie Federman will have a list of all haulers that are licensed to collect trash in town. The working group feels education for the residents regarding composting is key. A couple of ways to provide this could be through group presentations or one-on-one house calls.

### **Transfer Station / SWEF**

Arnie requested a meeting with Guilford regarding the transfer station and has also sent a follow up email but nothing has yet transpired. Susan reported that the SWEF is not doing well per Guilford and that she will be talking with him soon. The committee wants to know how we can be helpful but can't do anything without Guilford working with us. Susan will relay this to Guilford.

Concern was expressed about Guilford's message about recycling at town meeting. Susan and John will look at next month's agenda and decide whether to invite Guilford to the next RRMC meeting.

### **Downtown Recycling**

Brenda reported that they are still waiting to hear from BID about how the committee can help out. Grants are available for more recycling bins downtown and an enforcement coordinator. Susan will look into the due dates and the specifics of the grants to see what we can ask for.

Brenda would like adequate signage on the downtown recycling bins to distinguish them from existing trash bins. Recycling bins for the town parks will come after this pilot is determined to be successful. Cost is a concern. Working group will discuss the ideal number of downtown bins.

### **Sustainability Festival Wrap**

This year's recycling collections were a success. 571 pounds of textiles were collected, along with a fair amount of expanded polystyrene (EPS) and a large number of pellet bags. Sue will help Susan take care of the people who signed up for the "Notify Me" emails.

Amherst Farmer's Supply did not participate this year but are interested in doing so in the future. This can be pursued between now and next year's Festival.

A request was made that Gold Circuit E-cycling be added to the recycling website as a disposal site for pellet bags and EPS. It was also suggested that schools be notified of the Gold Circuit EPS option.